



Icebreaker

When I was in college, I went on a tour with my philosophy class to a Hindu temple, where a priest made a sacrifice to an idol of the god Shiva and then offered some of that food to us. Most of us ate, but one student did not. Did I do something wrong? (Story link: https://youtu.be/ad73XICx6_A?t=2686)

Limiting Liberty

In 1 Corinthians 8-10, Paul uses three scenarios to set up a principle that will be foundational to the majority of the rest of the letter; it's a principle that is required for any kind of community. Read 8:1-2. What's the principle?

The food example...

The first example of this principle is the idea of eating food sacrificed to idols. Read 1 Corinthians 8:1-13. What should we know about food sacrificed to idols?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:14-24. What should we know about sacrificial food?

Those passages seem a bit contradictory. What do you think Paul is getting at?

Paul's solution to the conflict shows up in 10:27-33. What do you think of that?

Also, how does "pleasing everyone" relate to glorifying God?

The vocational minister example...

In the first half of chapter 9, Paul makes the case that Christian ministers should be paid well, but in the second half of the chapter, he declares that he has refused this right because he wanted nothing to distract people from his message about Jesus. Read 9:19-23. What do you think of that?

The Israelites example...

In the first half of chapter 10, Paul makes the case that the Israelites had every spiritual blessing available to them and yet they fell prey to sexual immorality, gluttony, idolatry, grumbling, and other sins so that God judged them. Read 10:11-13. What do you think of that?

At issue throughout these chapters is this question: What does holiness look like for people who are attempting to live in unity with each other, and where should compromises be made? To answer that question, let's reconsider the issue of sacrificial food. Eating food sacrificed to idols was a common practice of the ancient world. For Christians, it was confusing. From one perspective, it was morally insignificant, but from another perspective, it was participation in demon worship! On top of it, Paul claims that knowledge and perspective make a real moral difference! Are there any practices like that today? Something that's common in the secular world that Christians might disagree about? Think of specific examples and discuss how Christians should approach that issue.

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